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HELEN J. DUBBS

AN EPISTLE TO The *Truly Religious* and *Loyal* GENTRY OF THE Church of England.

Written by *Edmund Ellis*, Rector of *East Arlington*, in the County of *Devon*.

Γενώμεθα χρηστοὶ εὐσπλάγχνοι, συμπαθεῖς μιμησώμεθα τὸν δεσπότην τὴν ἀγαθότητα.

Φιλανθρωπίαν ἡμᾶς τὴν εἰς ἀλλήλους ἀπαιτεῖ θεός. Greg. Nazianz. Orat. 9.

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An EPISTLE *to the Truly* Religious *and* Loyal GENTRY *of the* CHURCH *of* England, *&c.*

My Honour'd Brethren,

IF I thought the Addreſs, I here make unto you had need of an *Apologie*, it would be Uncapable of any. My Confidence, I confeſs, is utterly Inexcuſable, if it be not grounded upon *Reaſon*. What I Deſire therefore is only this, That you would be Pleaſed to Condeſcend to the moſt Serious Conſideration of what is Said by ſo Obſcure a Perſon.

I Do not Pretend to any Skill in the Letter of Our *Common Law*, but that Law which All Mankind Ought to be; and that Law which All Chriſtians Profeſs they are Govern'd by, has been my Study above thirty Years: And in the proſecution of *Charity*, or *Divine Love*, to which All my Speculations naturally Tend, I find it my Duty to Endeavour with all my might to Communicate the Knowledge I have of this Truth: that if

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the Parliament shall Comply with His Majesties most Just, and Equitable Desire of the *Abrogation* of all such Laws against the Papists which are more *Rigorous* than any of those against the other *Nonconformists*, it would most certainly conduce to the *Glory of God, and the Good of Men.* If any men should say what Impudence is this? Is not such a Proposal Contrary to the Present Government? I should Confidently Answer, It is not. And the Reasons of this Confidence I shall here (as well as I can within the compass of a Letter) in all Humility tender to your Consideration. By those words of the Blessed Apostle, „ Do we then make void the „Law, yea we establish the Law. I am prompted to say to our Adversaries in this Case, Do we subvert, yea we Establish the Present Government. That this may be clearly perceiv'd, I shall desire that it may be duly consider'd that whatsoever tends to the Establishing of the Rights of Our MON-

MONARCHIE does most certainly tend to the Eſtabliſhing of Our Civill Government: And what is it to Eſtabliſh the Rights of MONARCHIE but to Secure All Due Obedience to Our MONARCH and His Succeſſors throughout All Generations? Tho it be True indeed that it is the Duty of All Subjects, Enjoyn'd by the *Fifth Commandment*, to retain a FILIAL Affection for their PRINCE the FATHER of their Country, whatſoever he Does, or Deſigns, yet alas! ſince the Generality of men are Led more by the *Love of Life and Eſtate* than a Senſe of Duty towards God and the Hopes of Glory in the World to come, and ſince ſo many of thoſe who are *Habitually* Heavenly-minded often fall from their Better Temper, and are carried in the ſtream of *Secular* Intereſt, How can it be ſuppoſed, that *Subjects* ſhould be *Unite*d in their Affections to their *Prince*, and to one another, whilſt there are *Laws Standing* againſt ſo great a Number of Them,

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that are Persons very Ingenious, very Well bred, and of great Estates, many of them of Our most Antient Nobility, and many Exceeding Learned; Laws I say, which if put in Execution, would deprive them of their *Lives*, or *Estates*? And what do those men Intimate that are so Eager against the *Abrogating* of such Laws but that they Hope for a Time when they shall get the Bloud of some of their *Loyall Fellow-subjects* to be Shed, or their Estates taken from them, because they cannot Do what their Consciences, supported by the Concurring Judgements of Thousands of Sober, and Learned men, Oblidge them not to Do? if it shall be said what signifies an Oath to a Papist *&c.*? I shall most humbly beg that it may be considered whether such an Objection can have any thing in it of *Natural Conscience*, or *Common Honesty*, since Few, or none, that we know of the Papists, who took the Oath of Allegiance did ever Break it, but all the world know's it was

broken

Broken in the moſt haynous manner that poſſibly could be by Thouſands of that ſort of People who are, and ever have been moſt *Bloudily* ſet againſt the Papiſts. And as for this ſort of People, who Murthered the Father of Our Gracious Soveraign, Attempted the Murtheringof His Brother, and the Excluding of Himſelf from His Royal Inheritance and who were (I think, I may ſay All of them in their Perſons, or in their Hearts and Affections) ſo lately in Open Rebellion againſt Himſelf, let us Obſerve His Majeſties moſt Mercifull and Gracious Dealings with Them: And Admire the Benignity of that Wiſdom which has hitherto Govern'd Him ſince the Divine Providence brought Him to be Our Governour next, and Imemediately Under the Great and Glorious MONARCH of Heaven, and Earth. And ſince He is ſo Kind to them, how *Crooked* and *Perverſe* would it ſeem, if we ſhould endeavour to Obſtruct the *Current* of His Sacred Clemency, when it Flowes towards Perſons of His own Perſwaſion, in a way ſo juſt and Equitable in the ſight of all men? How much it would contribute to the Peace and Tranquillity, the Eaſe, and Comfort of a *Proteſtant Succeſſor*, if the Papiſts were freed from the Terror of thoſe Dreadful Laws I could ſpeak largely. But I ſhall haſten to my other Point, to ſhew that this *Lenity* to the Papiſts could be no Diſadvantage to the *Church of England* but rather a great Advantage in as much as we

ſhould thereby Declare to all the world the Sincerity of Our Profeſſion to be *Meek, and Lowly* in *Heart*, And that we will not be Affrighted by the *Phariſaicall Multitude* from Acknowledging All the Truth we find Profeſt, and all the Virtue we find Practiced by Papiſts. The *Holy Fathers* and the *Four Firſt Generall Councils*, next to the *Holy Scriptures*, Our Church is Founded upon; And how many Learned men in this Kingdome began to make light of theſe Bleſſed Records of Chriſtian Antiquity? which *Growing Evill* the Courſe, which His Majeſty has taken will moſt undoubtedly Suppreſs.

If theſe Dreadfull Laws were *Repeal'd* certainly it would take off the Edge of the Animoſities, which cannot but be in the Hearts of ſome Learned Papiſts againſt the Church of England which muſt needs make them in their Writings more *Pungent* than otherwiſe they would be. For, (poor men) they may juſtly apprehend that the Standing of Our Church tends to the Deſtruction of their Lives if Our Church cannot ſtand without thoſe Severe Laws that have been made againſt them.

I ſhall give you no further trouble at preſent, but ſhall Commend you to the the Protection and Inſtruction of the *Almighty, and Onely Wiſe God, the God of Peace, and Love*, And ſhall ever remaine

Your Affectionate

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